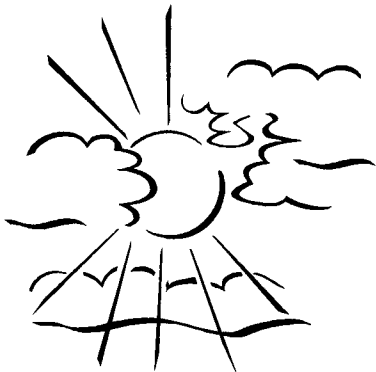


***Department  
of  
Human  
Services***

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
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\*Important story at this spot

# **Articles in Today's Clips**

## **Monday, October 24, 2005**

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Oct 23, 7:55 AM EDT

## Longtime welfare recipients could see changes

By AMY F. BAILEY  
Associated Press Writer

LANSING, Mich. (AP) -- Lisa Medina says she knows people who are on welfare although they are able to work. The 35-year-old mother of four insists she isn't one of them.

Medina, of Bay City, has been on and off welfare since 1987, when she gave birth to her son while still in high school. Over the past 10 years, she has been diagnosed with the autoimmune disorder known as lupus and with fibromyalgia, which causes muscle pain and fatigue. Those health issues keep her from holding a job.

"If I could work and not be on welfare, I would do it," she said.

Medina and others like her are being looked at by lawmakers searching for ways to reduce welfare costs. They've set up a panel to review who's getting assistance and what changes could be made in the state welfare program.

Several provisions of the law expire at the end of the year, including the sections that spell out which groups can be exempt from work requirements and lay out sanctions for those who aren't complying with work requirements.

Rep. Jerry Kooiman, a Grand Rapids Republican who's among the leaders of the welfare work group, said he expects the panel will develop more specific exemptions and harsher penalties for people who do not show up for work or job training. But they also will look at other, more expansive, changes, he said.

Earlier this year, GOP House members wanted to add provisions to the budget that started earlier this month that would have stopped welfare payments after four years while increasing the amount of money people can earn while continuing to receive aid.

The proposed changes didn't make it into the final budget bill, but the Granholm administration agreed to provide lawmakers a detailed report on recipients who had received welfare for longer periods.

The state had 23,500 welfare recipients who had gotten a welfare check for more than four years on the rolls in August. Of those, about 4,500 were still receiving checks because they were disabled, as Medina is, or taking care of a disabled relative.

Kooiman said there is a group of longtime welfare recipients that won't be able to move off cash assistance because of mental or physical disabilities. But he wants the state to regularly review those cases to make sure that all adults who can hold a job are working.

Without special provisions for the disabled, the proposed changes could hurt recipients like Deborah Harris, who hasn't been able to hold a job because she has to keep close watch over her mentally disabled 16-year-old son. He suffers from a seizure disorder and has severe sleep apnea, which requires him to use an oxygen machine.

Harris said she has purposely taken low-paying jobs so her income would be low enough to allow her son to continue to receive health care coverage from the state. His medication alone costs \$1,142 per month.

"No job could pay me that kind of money," the 54-year-old Flint resident said. "I don't know how better to coordinate his health needs with my wanting to work. I just can't. If I get one (job),

that's one thing taken care of, but who is going to send him off in the morning? Who's going to allow me to leave in middle of day because he had a seizure?"

The House-Senate work group, which began meeting last week, will not have public hearings before introducing its legislation but will hear from welfare experts and representatives from the administration of Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm, Kooiman said.

The group wants to get the legislation drawn up in time to get it taken up by the House and Senate and sent to Granholm's desk by year's end.

Sharon Parks, vice president for policy at the Lansing-based Michigan League for Human Services, said she is worried the new work group is not setting aside enough time to take a good look at the welfare program and the affects of any changes it proposes.

"This issue is enormously complex and requires more than a few short weeks of study," she said.

"There are a lot of things that need to be looked at."

Kooiman said he wants to continue improving the state program that got national attention in the 1990s because of reforms made by former Gov. John Engler to move able-bodied single adults off welfare and into jobs. The welfare rolls dropped by nearly 70 percent under Engler.

"We made some initial great steps with welfare reform in the '90s, but we sort of stepped back from that," Kooiman said. "It's time to reinvigorate those efforts."

Michigan is the only state in the region that does not limit welfare benefits to five years, Kooiman said. The federal government limits assistance to five years, but allows states to have about 20 percent of their caseloads continue to get benefits past that time.

As of September, 10,060 of the state's 78,000 welfare recipients - about 13 percent - had gotten a welfare check for more than five years, according to the Michigan Department of Human Services.

DHS director Marianne Udow said earlier this year that those still on the rolls after four years generally are people who would have a hard time becoming economically independent.

"We're talking about enormously hard-to-serve people with mental health problems, disabilities, just huge issues," she said. "If we just cut off their benefits, what will happen to them? They will be homeless or end up involved with the criminal justice system."

Kooiman said he'd like to see caseworkers give welfare recipients more individual attention to help them set goals and figure out how to get the skills needed for jobs that pay more than minimum wage and have long-term stability.

DHS also plans to step up its efforts to get welfare recipients into long-term jobs with a pilot program it will launch later this year in several counties, said Jim Nye, deputy director in charge of field services for the department.

The department is adding 22 staff members in selected counties to help reduce the amount of cash assistance for long-term cases or close them altogether, Nye said. Additional staff can help locate a parent who is not paying child support and provide more help to recipients trying to find a job, get training or enroll in treatment programs, he said.

"This is going to be a culture change and an opportunity," Nye said about the pilot program.

"The client really needs to buy into this. We can offer them all the services needed, but unless you're ready to actively engage it's not going to help."

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On the Net:

Michigan Department of Human Services: <http://www.michigan.gov/dhs>

Michigan Legislature: <http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

Monday, October 24, 2005

## **Domestic violence survivor uses her story to help others**

By Betty DeRamus / The Detroit News

Lidria Byrd tried more than 100 times to leave the husband who punched and kicked her, but he always sweet-talked her into staying.

She returned to her husband despite more than 30 trips to the emergency room of a West Virginia hospital with fractured ribs and other injuries.

She returned to her husband even though he threw her from a moving car into a ditch.

And she returned to him after he flared up in rage because she seemed to pile more eggs on a guest's plate than on his.

Along with her three children, Byrd finally left her first husband for good in 1985 and moved back to Michigan.

The Southfield woman is now on the front lines of the fight against domestic violence -- and not just during Domestic Violence Month. In fact, a pamphlet she wrote called "Battered Woman's Survivor Guide" is now in many area hospital emergency rooms.

Byrd says she's on a crusade to make it easier for spouses to find the strength to leave the men -- and, sometimes, women -- who control them through beatings, insults and other kinds of torture. She is using her story to help doctors recognize battering in the women they see. In her 30 trips to hospitals, she points out, no hospital staffers ever asked if her husband had abused her.

According to Byrd, there are many reasons women stay in violent relationships, including scanty financial or social resources, low self-esteem and the desire to maintain a marriage, or the husk of one, at all costs.

A woman, she says, also might be swayed by an abuser's phony tears or promises to change. Or she might fear for her life or the lives of her children.

However, despite years of therapy and thought, Byrd -- 50 and now happily remarried -- isn't sure why she swallowed so much. She's quick to tell you, though, that the question that really needs answering is, "Why did he hit me?"

"What I (also) want to talk about is the fact that the police department did not help me," she added. "I was in their town and no one helped me, not even the deputy sheriffs that I not only lived next door to, but I also ran to and through their home in fear for my life on more than one occasion."

Byrd encourages people planning to leave a violent partner to develop an action plan.

"When the police aren't there to help, you've got to help yourself," she says. "There's never going to be a right time when you've saved up enough money or your kids are grown enough."

The plan should include the telephone numbers of trusted people and agencies that a victim can call for help. In some cases, those numbers might have to be scrawled inside a shoe or on a dress's inner sleeve.

The Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, (517) 347-7000, is one agency battered women can call.

"But what I most want people to know is that domestic violence is ... about power and control," says Byrd, who's been banged around and bruised but can now laugh and love.

# A woman's story of the man she loved and feared

Sunday, October 23, 2005

By Chris Meehan [cmeehan@kalamazoogazette.com](mailto:cmeehan@kalamazoogazette.com) 388-8412

Mark Reinhold testified in a Kalamazoo County court on Sept. 9 that he thought he finally had his mental illness under control. Less than three weeks later, police say, the 38-year-old former health-care executive brutally beat a woman in a Detroit-area trailer park.

Considered by police to be "armed and extremely dangerous," Reinhold then fled to the Kalamazoo area, where he had previously lived.

His ex-wife, Julie Couch, 46, no stranger to her ex-husband's explosive personality, had learned through a phone call from a friend about the trailer-park beating and feared for her life. She took refuge in her brother's Richland-area home.

Exactly what had tipped the balance of Reinhold's mental state this time wasn't clear.

But Couch wasn't taking chances.

Keeping their 10-year-old daughter by her side, Couch spent more than two days trying to persuade local authorities that her former spouse -- by then featured on the TV show "America's Most Wanted" -- was coming for her, she says.

This was a man who had been put on probation in 2000 for domestic violence, was accused of it at least two other times and had been convicted within the last year for pulling a switchblade on a court process server.

"I knew he would come here to Kalamazoo County," Couch said recently as she sat in the home of a friend in Richland Township. "He told me (during the marriage) he would kill me, my children and my parents." Once he even said he could hire a hit man for \$500 to kill her, she said. Couch, who has been married three times, has an older daughter from her first marriage, a son whom Reinhold adopted, and their biological daughter. Couch and Reinhold met in 1990, were married in 1993 and divorced in 2004.

Domestic violence experts say Reinhold's path of violence was part of a classic abuse cycle that is often tragically predictable. Help for domestic abusers is available, but unless an abuser admits to the problem and the cycle of violence is broken, things can lead to a very bad place.

That place for Couch was hiding out with her 10-year-old daughter in her brother's home.

For Reinhold, it was a cornfield near Cold Brook County Park in Charleston Township. That is where, on Oct. 2, police found, confronted and ended up shooting the armed fugitive. He died later that day at Borgess Medical Center.

## **'Choked, kicked, hit'**

Although the intense fear of those two days is over for Couch, questions and confusion about the relationship continue. She says she keeps asking herself what she could have done differently. She tried to protect herself and her children, but that didn't stop the violence.

"Mark has choked, kicked, hit, thrown objects at myself" and the children, Couch wrote when filing for a personal protection order in 2002 asking the court to keep Reinhold away from them.

Although she was injured during some of the outbursts, she rarely sought medical help, she said. For one thing, she had worked as an emergency-room nurse and feared former co-workers would see her if she showed up.

In a supplement to her 2002 personal protection order, she described her emotions: "I want to be evaporated, be beamed up, just disappear. I am ashamed. Why did I stay so long? What kind of mother am I?"

She left Reinhold, fought him in court and lived for several months at a domestic-abuse shelter in Ann Arbor. But she could never really break away. Despite the violence and the arguments, she kept allowing him back into her life, following separations and even after she filed for divorce.

"More needs to be done to help people who have been abused," said Couch, who early last week moved to another country with her younger daughter. "But it is hard to talk about it. The social stigma (of being an abuse victim) is so intense."

### **Pain all around**

Members of Reinhold's immediate family were contacted for this story, but none was willing to discuss the case for publication. Some family members, however, say they -- and especially Mark's mother, Marian Reinhold, of Kalamazoo -- are in too much pain to talk.

As to why domestic violence occurs, it can vary from situation to situation. It can involve husbands beating wives or, less frequently, wives battering husbands. Children are often caught in the crossfire.

What is common, though, is that signs of the potential for this type of violence are there from the start.

"I'm not speaking about any particular case, but the point is that there are patterns and warning signs," said Jennifer Shoub, CEO of the YWCA of Kalamazoo, which operates a domestic assault shelter.

"We need to recognize that there are issues of power and control as early as the dating relationship."

The national Centers for Disease Control reports that nearly 9 million incidents of domestic violence occur every year, causing nearly 2 million injuries and 1,300 deaths nationwide.

The YWCA in Kalamazoo reports that it provided shelter to 277 victims in 2004.

"Unfortunately, the numbers here are not going down. They are pretty much staying the same," said Sherry Brockway, the YWCA's criminal justice advocacy services supervisor.

### **The violence begins**

Julie Couch met Mark Reinhold in February 1990 when they were both studying nursing in Kalamazoo, at Nazareth College, which has since closed.

She graduated in April of that year and moved to Oak Park, Ill., to take a job at a hospital.

In a document submitted for a court hearing in 2002, Couch said Mark often traveled to Illinois to spend time with her and her two children -- a girl who in 1990 was 9 and a boy who was 3.

They were eating dinner in October 1990 when the 3-year-old began acting up, and suddenly "Mark swung his hand to (the boy) and knocked (him) out of his seat and onto the floor," she wrote.

Couch quickly went to help her son and was relieved to find he was not injured.

After dinner, Couch said, she questioned Reinhold about the incident, the first of its kind during their relationship. Reinhold behaved "as though he was the one hurt," she said. Even so, he apologized.

During one hearing about child visitation, in September in the Kalamazoo County Circuit Court, Reinhold testified he had trouble handling his anger during the years with his former wife.

Although he didn't specifically address the dinner-table incident, he did acknowledge there were other instances when he had been angry.

"There were altercations that occurred," he said during that hearing before Judge Curtis Bell.

#### **'Personable and successful'**

#### **'Personable and successful'**

Cindy Continenza was friends with Mark and Julie Reinhold in the early days of their marriage. The families were neighbors in Richland and had children attending St. Mary Catholic School in Kalamazoo. Reinhold was working for Mercy Health Services -- now Trinity Health -- in Muskegon at the time.

"We knew Mark," said Continenza, who still lives in the Richland area. "He was always there" at events for his son.

She especially recalls speaking with him in the parking lot of the Catholic school. He had shown up to bring lunch for his son.

"He was a very personable and successful administrator in a hospital," she said. "He was very professional-looking, clean and not disturbed-looking."

At times, when Couch got sick and was hospitalized for treatment of various physical problems, Reinhold would "cover the bases," Continenza said. "He would take on an enormous load."

But Continenza also eventually learned, through conversations with Couch, that "there was some domestic violence behind closed doors."

Jackie Redmond, Couch's sister, also saw Reinhold as a "very intelligent executive. ... There were some good things about Mark," she said.

At the beginning of the marriage, Redmond said, "my sister wanted so bad for this marriage to succeed and for her children, her and Mark to become a happy, normal family."

Reinhold had some family members "fooled into thinking he was such a great guy," Redmond said. "... It even appeared that Mark was the good person in their relationship and that Julie was the one who caused all of the problems."

Denial and hiding of the violence are common in domestic-abuse cases, said Linda Lumley, a domestic abuse specialist and educator at the Sindecuse Health Center at Western Michigan University.

Also common, Lumley said, is the tendency to blame the victim.

"People ask why were they so stupid to stay," Lumley said. "But part of her still loves (the abuser). They started out very loving, and she keeps hoping it will go back to that."

#### **Argument in the woods**

Several incidents of domestic abuse involving Reinhold and his wife and children are alleged in various court and Family Independence Agency documents.

One of the best-documented cases is the subject of a Newaygo County Sheriff's Department report taken on Oct. 5, 2003.

Reinhold, Couch and their daughter were riding in a black Land Rover through the woods. They were lost and hoping to find friends who were supposed to be nearby, when an argument broke out.

In her remarks to investigators afterward, Couch said Reinhold bit her ear, started to strangle her and threatened to kill her.

Reinhold, however, is the one who called police after he and his wife, from whom he was separated at the time, fought over being lost and ended up on the ground outside the vehicle.

"Mark never stated that he physically hit Julie, but he did state that his daughter ... at one point began throwing rocks at him and Mark stated he wanted her to go away," says the police report.

The report goes on to say, "Mark stated at one time he did, in fact, turn and throw one of the rocks back at his daughter."

All three of them went to the hospital for treatment. No one was seriously hurt, but everyone had abrasions.

Reinhold was then lodged in the Newaygo County Jail on a charge of domestic violence. The case was referred on Oct. 6, 2002, to the state's Family Independence Agency for a Protective Services investigation.

After interviewing everyone involved, the investigator recommended in a report that "a domestic violence charge is pursued due to Julie Couch- Reinhold stating that this has happened in the past and she is fed up with it. Also a charge of Child Abuse due to Mark Reinhold throwing a rock at his own daughter and creating an injury."

The case, however, never went to trial because Couch ended up dropping the charges.

"I did that because Mark told me that he would lose his job and we would lose all of our money" if it came to light that he was convicted of domestic assault, Couch said.

Reinhold was working as vice president of patient satisfaction at the Trinity Health office in Novi at the time. For various reasons, including his deteriorating state of mental health, he was removed from that job early in 2004 and put on disability.

"We lost our money anyway," Couch said.

Also at that time, the divorce became final.

#### **Treatment at last**

Family members say this is when Reinhold went into a tailspin, ending up at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, where he was treated on and off for several months, both in and out of the hospital.

It was at this time that Reinhold finally got the kind of mental health treatment he needed, he testified in Bell's courtroom last month.

A proper diagnosis of depression, bipolar disorder, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and borderline personality disorder, along with proper medication and therapy, made a big difference for him, he said.

"I feel much more confident now than I did six months ago," he testified. "I feel totally different. It's like night and day. ... I spent a significant amount of time talking about the triggers that have caused problems for me and others in the past."

In fact, his mental state improved to the point where he decided he wanted to go to court to fight to be able to spend more time with his daughter.

When the couple divorced in 2004, Kalamazoo County Circuit Court Judge Carolyn Williams had denied Reinhold any visitation with the girl.

In June of this year, Judge Bell amended the order to allow visitation as long as it was supervised by Reinhold's mother. In the courtroom, Bell praised Marian Reinhold for being so supportive of her son and for being so involved in the life of her granddaughter.

"The grandmother has been at every court proceeding," Bell said. "She is not going to risk her granddaughter any harm. She has been very good."

It was when Couch indicated she wanted to take the girl and move out of the country that Mark Reinhold asked the court to forbid her from leaving and to give him expanded visitation.

During the hearing in September before Bell, Reinhold testified about his love for his daughter. He told the court that they enjoyed playing tennis together, riding bicycles, going sledding in the winter and playing board games.



“I'd love to see (her) at least every other weekend and if possible during the week for dinner,” he said.

As part of this hearing, Reinhold's Ann Arbor psychiatrist, Dr. Arcadio Ramirez, testified about the mental state of his patient. The psychiatrist said that “he (Reinhold) had a very severe difficulty early in his life with anger.”

But it was Ramirez's opinion that Reinhold had come to realize, through hospitalization and treatment, that there “are things he can do to handle his anger. I think he is doing pretty good with his anger.”

The psychiatrist mentioned that Reinhold had had a periodic problem with alcohol abuse and that Reinhold had called him in February to report he had been on a two-day drinking binge. But since then, as far as Ramirez knew, his patient had been sober and properly taking his medication.

“There is no psychiatric indication to prevent him from seeing his daughter for any length of time,” Ramirez told Bell. “He seems to be doing quite well.”

Bell ended the hearing by issuing a temporary order allowing Reinhold to visit with his daughter on alternate weekends. Bell did not require that the visits be supervised, but, among other things, he stipulated that Reinhold would lose his visitation rights if he drank alcohol or failed to take his medication.

When Bell issued that ruling, Couch slapped her head in disbelief, as seen in a video tape of the hearing.

“I still can't figure out what the judge was thinking. It boggles my mind,” she said in a phone interview last week from the country where she and her daughter have moved.

Bell defended his decision when asked about it last week: “We had the psychiatrist saying he was fine and that he was doing great.”

Reinhold struck Bell as reasonable and in control of himself in his testimony, Bell said. “I don't know what happened after he left my court.”

#### **Assault in Detroit, terror in Richland**

Police say it appears that Reinhold had a girlfriend who was living in a mobile home in a Detroit-area trailer park. This woman, police say, was writing out a personal protection order, asking Wayne County authorities to prohibit Reinhold from visiting her home, on the day Reinhold attacked and beat another woman.

The other woman was a friend who happened to stop by as Reinhold was waiting in the mobile home for his girlfriend to return.

State Police investigators say Reinhold seriously assaulted the 36-year-old Belleville woman about 7:50 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 28.

She was taken to St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, where she remains in serious condition, police say. After the assault, Reinhold apparently drove his SUV to the Kalamazoo area, possibly with the intention of harming his ex-wife.

“Obviously Mr. Reinhold was a violent person based on the action that took place in Wayne County,” said Lt. Dale Peet, who is coordinating an ongoing State Police investigation into Reinhold's death.

Julie Couch “had legitimate concern over him trying to get to her,” Peet said in an interview following Reinhold's death.

Only on Friday, Sept. 30, two days after the beating in Detroit, did Couch learn it had happened. She decided immediately that she had to hide.

For two nights and into a third day, she and her 10-year-old daughter stayed inside her brother Patrick Couch's home, the brother said, and he loaded his .16-gauge shotgun.

When Patrick Couch's dog grew restless that Saturday night, they began to fear that Reinhold was in the woods outside the home.

“We felt that he was around,” Patrick Couch said. “I stayed up all night.”

Brother and sister also kept calling state, county and local police agencies, but they say they got conflicting accounts of how seriously the police were taking the threat of Reinhold showing up.

At one point, Julie Couch suggested that police check area campgrounds.

Then, on Sunday, Oct. 2, she and her brother learned from the “America's Most Wanted” Web site that Reinhold had been shot in a confrontation with a State Police trooper and a Kalamazoo County sheriff's deputy in a field about 10 miles south of Patrick Couch's home.

Why Reinhold snapped as he did at the end is hard to say, Couch said.

But she does know that he never clearly admitted to his tendency toward violence. Only his death broke the cycle.

“I think he lost control. He was trying to handle too much. He should have tried to let himself heal,” she said.

“So many things have happened. I'm still discovering what I feel.”

Monday, October 24, 2005

## **Group aims to set abuse victims free Clemency petitions ready for inmates who murdered**

By Karen Bouffard / The Detroit News

To Oakland County prosecutors, it was an open and shut case: Karen Kantzler, 56, murdered her husband in cold blood.

Paul Kantzler, a prominent West Bloomfield Township radiologist, was shot dead on March 11, 1987, as he slept in the couple's bed. Karen Kantzler tried to cover it up by telling police he had committed suicide. Then she said she shot her husband in a struggle over the gun. In the end, she was convicted of second-degree murder, and sentenced to life in prison.

Advocates with the Michigan Battered Women's Clemency Project say there's more to Kantzler's story -- that Paul Kantzler drugged and raped his wife, beat her with wooden logs, held guns to her head and smashed her into a concrete floor during a brutal marriage.

Kantzler is among 20 Michigan prisoners, represented by the project, who murdered after what they contend was years of violent abuse. Most killed in the 1970s and '80s, before society knew much about domestic violence -- and before 1992, when the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that expert testimony about battered spouse syndrome must be permitted in court, if the defense requests it. Each year since Gov. Jennifer Granholm took office in 2003, the group has asked the governor to grant clemency to the women. So far, Granholm has turned down all of the requests. But on a thread of hope, the group is submitting the petitions yet again.

"Some of these women were victims of incredible personal abuse, and in many instances the record of that abuse was not even allowed in the courtroom," said former Michigan Gov. William Milliken, who has asked Granholm to consider the petitions.

"The governor has enormous power, and often it's the last resort, to review cases such as these," said Milliken, a Republican. "That power needs to be judiciously and often used. Regrettably, so far it has not been properly used in my opinion." Based on a suggestion made last year by Teresa Bingman, one of Granholm's deputies, project volunteers have spent months poring through old court files, contacting police departments, searching hospital records and talking to witnesses to obtain fresh evidence of domestic violence.

Carol Jacobsen, a University of Michigan professor and director of the clemency project, said she doesn't know whether Bingman's suggestion signals a softening on Granholm's part, or was just an offhand suggestion.

"We don't know if this is just a stalling tactic, or if (Granholm) really will take this and act on it if she feels it's sufficient," Jacobsen said.

"We've always taken the issue seriously and we continue to," said Heidi Hansen, a spokeswoman for Granholm. "We just want to make sure they have as much information in there as possible so we can continue to review it with the same seriousness."

The women's supporters are perplexed that Granholm has failed to free the women -- even as the state copes with the problems of prison overcrowding and a budget deficit.

Former Oakland County Circuit Judge Norman Lippitt, who tried Kantzler's case, supports Kantzler's bid for freedom, and wrote to Granholm to request that Kantzler be granted clemency.

Lippitt says he sentenced Kantzler to life, but he believed at the time that Kantzler would be released in 10 years when she became eligible for parole. He didn't find out until later that in practice, the parole board does not parole prisoners serving life terms, Lippitt said.

"I've been trying to get her out of jail for 10 years," Lippitt said. "By law, they could have released her. ... Had I known the practicality and the implications, I would have given her a definite term of years."

"There's no question that she killed him in his sleep, the malice was there, but she was a battered woman," Lippitt added.

"I tried to take that into consideration -- the background, and being a battered woman and all that -- but I made a mistake and I've been trying to tell everybody ever since."

Still, some people have little sympathy for the women. Joyce Todd, chief of the appellate division of the Oakland County prosecutor's office, said Kantzler, for one, had her chance.

"This issue has been litigated numerous times in the courts, so (Kantzler's) conviction and the sentence has not been overturned," Todd said. "We defended what we maintain is a lawful sentence."

"She shot her husband as he slept. It sounds like cold-blooded murder to me," Todd added. "The parole board could release her if they want, but they have not, so it would appear that they feel she is still a threat to society."

Another convict, Linda Rose Hamilton, also has been supported by the judge who tried her.

Hamilton was accused of conspiring with two others to have her husband, John Hamilton, murdered. She was convicted of first-degree murder and conspiracy, and has been in prison for 28 years.

Former Oakland County Circuit Court Judge Robert Webster wrote to Granholm to request Hamilton's freedom -- partly because the issue of domestic violence was not introduced during her trial. Hamilton claims that her husband repeatedly abused her and that he sexually assaulted her 4-year-old daughter.

"I'd always been disturbed about a murder one conviction, but that's the way it is," Webster said.

"She wasn't out pillaging the neighborhood, and then you crank in evidence that very likely should have come in. ... It seems to me the governor could commute."

Hamilton, who suffers from degenerative eye diseases that have left her nearly blind, has devoted her life to providing emotional support for other inmates. Once, she untied a woman who had hanged herself in a suicide attempt. If she ever gets out, she wants to be a domestic abuse counselor. Hamilton's sister, Marie Cole, recently wrote an affidavit detailing what she knew of the abuse. The affidavit is among new evidence attached to Hamilton's petition. "I think she served her time, and I think she had a reason for doing what she did," Cole said. "It wasn't for money, it was for the molestation of her daughter." Barbara Hernandez, 31, was just 16 years old when she was convicted of armed robbery and three counts of first-degree murder in the death of a man stabbed to death by her boyfriend. She has spent her entire adult life behind bars. Her sister, Elizabeth Hernandez of Ypsilanti, said Barbara was under the control of her sadistic boyfriend, James Hyde, when she lured the victim to the scene of what she thought was to be a robbery. Hyde, now 35, slashed him to death. Hyde is now serving a life sentence at Baraga Maximum Correctional Facility in the Upper Peninsula. Barbara had left home at age 12, taking to the streets to escape severe physical, sexual and mental abuse at home, Elizabeth Hernandez said. She got involved with Hyde when she was just 13. "He locked her up in a bedroom with no clothes, he threw an ashtray at her, he burned her with cigarettes," Elizabeth Hernandez said. "If she was able to leave, he would come find her. He told her if any of us called the cops he would do harm to her or us. "I took her in and tried to keep her away from him the best I could, but his words overpowered everything. He had a lot of control over her."

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# Remembering Victims of Domestic Violence

Matt Treadwell, The Huron Daily Tribune

10/21/2005

Protected from the wind by a cupped hand, a candle burns in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. More than a dozen people gathered Thursday evening at the steps of the Huron County Courthouse for a candlelight vigil to remember those who have lost their lives or have experienced the fear of living through domestic abuse.

Participants listened to and read stories about Michigan women and children who have died as a result of domestic abuse and stood together in prayer with their lit candles. A domestic violence survivor also addressed the group.

Tamara Richardson, executive director for Huron County SafePlace, said it is estimated that 2 to 4 million women are victimized by domestic violence each year and four women are murdered each day in the United States as a result of the crime. In Huron County, she said Central Dispatch received 203 domestic violence calls in 2003 and 183 calls in 2004 — about one call every other day.

Thursday's vigil was sponsored by The Huron County Coalition Against Domestic Abuse and SafePlace Shelter Auxiliary. For more information or to receive help from domestic abuse, contact the SafePlace coalition at (989) 269-5300 or National Domestic Violence Hotline toll free at (800) 799-SAFE.

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# made homeless by meth

Sunday, October 23, 2005

kjessup@kalamazoogazette.com 388-8590

Caseworkers are seeing this scenario play out more and more in St. Joseph County: A small child watches as police, their faces covered by protective masks, swarm his home. Containers and tubing are cautiously removed from the kitchen. Someone takes the child by the hand, leading him into the night air.

In the confusion, the child realizes his blanket has been left behind. He tugs away to retrieve it, but police concerned that the active methamphetamine lab inside could explode have blocked off the home's entrance.

The special blanket cannot come with the child to the new, unfamiliar place where he will go to live.

Ernesto Diaz, a St. Joseph County Department of Human Services child-protective-services worker, can't retrieve clothing, toys or even a child's security blanket when he arrives on the scene to take charge of a child living with a methamphetamine lab.

Everything, including the clothing the child is wearing, must be discarded as hazardous waste if it's been tainted by the toxic byproducts of meth.

In response, St. Joseph County has launched its "suitcase project," in which DHS caseworkers let displaced children choose a small, new suitcase, then fill it with a stuffed animal, a new blanket, combs and toothbrushes, all designed to help ease the trauma of moving to a foster-care home with nothing familiar.

The St. Joseph County DHS office keeps a supply of suitcases and bags of children's items ready for the times police make that middle-of-the-night call to DHS workers to take custody of kids found living in meth homes.

"It's very difficult to explain to a child why they have to leave their parents and everything behind," said Diaz. "This suitcase is some security in so much chaos, something they can hold onto at a time when nothing seems to be going their way."

Suzanne Lind, executive director of the St. Joseph County Child Abuse and Neglect Council, remembers when abused or neglected children could at least stuff their belongings into garbage bags when they left their homes behind. But for children who live among the explosive components and toxic fumes of meth "cooked" in a kitchen or even the family car, nothing is considered safe from contamination.

"The suitcase is something that's theirs, and it provides a little more dignity when they have so many feelings to deal with," Lind said. "I was there at the office one day when a worker took a little guy -- 5 or 6 years old -- to pick out his suitcase. I wish you could have seen his eyes as we put these things in his suitcase."

"I often think of how my own daughter arrived at foster care when she was 4," said Lind, an adoptive mother. "It would be a comfort to me to think she had a soft, new blanket to make her feel safe."

Lind said St. Joseph County's methamphetamine busts may have doubled demand in the last year, with 10 to 12 children each month now beginning their moves with a small suitcase. The project's annual \$1,000 budget is being stretched by increased calls.

According to Lind, the suitcase project represents community collaboration, including private business, faith-based organizations, community volunteers, the United Way-supported CA/N Council, and volunteers with Project Linus, a national program that provides handmade blankets. CA/N purchases the suitcases at cost. Churches are the major source for the donated supplies, including deodorant, soap and washcloths, toothbrushes and shampoo. Some bags are outfitted with diapers, pacifiers and baby bottles for infants headed to foster care.



# Holly teacher at center of probe retires

HOLLY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, October 24, 2005

By Robert Snell

rsnell@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6302

HOLLY - A suspended teacher and legendary tennis coach has retired amid an investigation into improper behavior with students.

In the meantime, a state police investigation should be submitted to the Oakland County prosecutor's office by the end of this week.

Bill McDaniel retired Friday as the district continued to pursue tenure charges - a type of investigation that could have ended in termination, said Superintendent Kent Barnes, who declined to comment about McDaniel's case specifically.

McDaniel, 55, had been on paid leave since July, when the Board of Education started investigating allegations of drunkenness and improper behavior with minors during an out-of-town tournament.

"I think there is a lot of disappointment from people who knew him and the program, and there's also people waiting to see how the facts turn out," said Board of Education Vice President David Rath.

McDaniel declined comment Sunday and referred calls to his attorney, Walter Piszczatowski, who could not be reached for comment.

He was suspended in July after some students said he drank, provided alcohol to an underage person and spent two nights in a motel room with a 17-year-old female student during a June tournament in Kalamazoo.

Detective Sgt. Gary Muir of the state police post in Groveland Township said the coach is accused of having a sexual relationship with a student he coached, beginning when she was 16. State law prohibits school employees from sexual relationships with students at their building, but McDaniel taught at the middle school and was a high school coach, Muir said.

Muir said that's one of the issues the prosecutor will have to decide in terms of whether McDaniel can be charged with a crime.

Muir said the girl sent a threatening e-mail message when her relationship with McDaniel cooled. McDaniel's wife reported the message to the police.

The Oakland County prosecutor's office declined to issue charges in connection with the threat, but it ultimately led to the girl, now 18, revealing the nature of her past relationship with the coach, Muir said.

The allegations ended a coaching career that culminated in McDaniel's induction into the Michigan High School Tennis Coaches' Hall of Fame in 2003.

In August, McDaniel ranked second on the area's all-time victories list with a 371-135-3 record. During his tenure, Holly's boys and girls teams captured 38 Metro League championships, 13 regional titles and qualified for the state tournament 25 times.

McDaniel, who also taught sixth grade at Karl Richter Intermediate School, was succeeded this fall by former assistant coach Brennan Brown.

McDaniel's class has been taught by a long-term substitute, and a decision eventually could be made about finding a permanent replacement, Barnes said.

School officials did not negotiate the retirement or offer McDaniel a severance package, said Barnes.

"I think that's an inappropriate use of tax dollars," he said.

The suspension and allegations have not adversely impacted students or the district, Barnes said.

"It does take some time and energy," he said. "More than a mosquito bite, but not a totally disruptive force."

Letters

Sunday, October 23, 2005

The Grand Rapids Press

## **No fear**

In response to the article ("Bus bullying, 'not a racist thing,' " Press, Oct. 14) about the bully beating on a 11-year-old biracial boy. It is so appalling that this still goes on but not surprising. Bullies are nothing but cowardly punks who have to prove they are so tough by beating up other children who are either too afraid or small or different.

I remember going to school where a creep beat and bullied a boy his age just because the boy had red hair. The principals did absolutely nothing about it.

My suggestion to Mr. and Mrs. Ambrose is to get a good lawyer and sue the school, the Greenville Board of Education and the assailant's parents. Maybe that will get the message across all schools to be much more stiff about children being bullied. A child should not be afraid of going to school.

KATE HUBBARD

Grand Rapids

# Volunteers make security blankets

Sunday, October 23, 2005

[kjessup@kalamazoogazette.com](mailto:kjessup@kalamazoogazette.com) 388-8590

THREE RIVERS -- Linus never appeared in a frame of the Peanuts comic strip without his security blanket. But Linus probably was never an abused or neglected child living in a meth house.

Dozens of volunteers, from grandmothers to Three Rivers-area teenagers, work several hours a year knitting, cutting, tying, quilting and crocheting blankets meant to offer comfort to children in crisis. Some youngsters may be dealing with family death or illness, while others get their blankets when they check into a local homeless shelter or domestic abuse site.

New blankets made by Jonathan's Project Linus volunteers have wrapped infants who had no other clothing and a 16-year-old boy who had lost his mother. According to Carole Seman, a retired school counselor and Project Linus coordinator in Three Rivers, blankets ``are associated with security; they're a means of comfort in a stressful or crisis situation in a child's life."

According to Seman, nearly half of the 250 blankets produced by the local chapter annually go to the St. Joseph County Department of Human Services children's-services workers. Many of those end up in the county's ``suitcase project" that gives children headed to foster care a new suitcase, personal care items, a stuffed toy and a blanket when they're moved to a foster home.

``One of the workers told me they had to remove a brand-new baby and that's all the baby had," Seman said. ``When someone gets one of these warm, soft blankets, it's like getting a hug from another person."

Project Linus is a national all-volunteer organization. Seman started the Three Rivers' chapter to memorialize her 12-year-old grandson, Jonathan, who died several years ago after a 10-year battle with kidney disease.

Locally, most of Seman's ``blanketeers" are retired women and church-group members who enjoy devoting their sewing, crocheting and knitting skills to more than ``just another afghan." Blanket-making also has become a popular service project for some Three Rivers elementary and middle school students who do community service in an after-school mentoring program.

Before a Project Linus blanket is offered to an agency, Seman sews on a label with a message to its eventual owner:

``The best kind of sleep under heaven above

``Is under a blanket, handmade with love."

Michigan Report

October 21, 2005

**TRANSPORTATION FOR CHILDREN:** Elementary school children in the state can learn about different modes of transportation, safety hints for each, and the importance of a centennial birthday through a new book created by Department of Transportation staff. Bridget and Little Mac's Birthday Trip, written by Michelle Myers and illustrated by Brian Whitfield, is being circulated to schools around the state as part of MDOT's Centennial School Celebration.

"This book not only talks about transportation, but it shows kids how to share, and ask for help. It shows fitness and safety, love and family," Mr. Whitfield said.

The book was produced with donated funds and will be donated to schools visited by MDOT employees over the coming school year.

# Stolen cars add up for teens

Sunday, October 23, 2005

JOE SNAPPER  
THE SAGINAW NEWS

A friendly rivalry over who had the coolest ride spiraled into a \$250,000 car-theft spree for a group of Saginaw pals who could not legally drive, police say.

The heists of more than 30 automobiles, ranging from a 1986 Chevrolet Blazer to a loaded 2006 Nissan Pathfinder, may lead to charges against up to seven teens, most juveniles, investigators said.

Whether parked on curbs, in driveways or in sales lots, it didn't matter. The brazen teens kept boosting cars even after police informed some they were under investigation for car theft.

"Basically, they drove these cars for status," said Saginaw County Sheriff's Detective Gary Fitzmaurice, who said he obtained confessions from some suspects. "Then it spread."

Five at a time piled into the Blazer on car hunts, stealing on one street a 1990 BMW, the next a 1990 Pontiac, and so on. They made up to three trips a day during the past two months.

"You get one kid that steals a car from the West Side to show their friend," Fitzmaurice said.

"Then the friend goes and gets a car. It kind of rolled into that."

Their method was simple. They looked for cars with keys left in them. When they didn't find keys, they smashed drop boxes at car dealerships, grabbed key rings, pushed remote unlock buttons to see which cars responded or simply strolled car lot aisles trying doors, Fitzmaurice said.

The \$35,000 Pathfinder squealed off Garber Nissan's lot. A used GMC Envoy vanished from Garber Buick. A 2005 Nissan Maxima and a 2001 Hyundai got boosted too, he said.

Fitzmaurice estimated the vehicles total value at "at least a quarter-million dollars." Police still have not found the Hyundai, a four-door gold XG 300 with a license plate of WKX901.

He asked anyone with information to call the Saginaw County Auto Theft Team at 759-1212.

Fitzmaurice said the three teens in custody attended Webber Middle, North Middle and Saginaw High schools. Not one teen had a valid driver's license.

"I believe that, the way they drove my Jeep," said Loretta Averill of Saginaw. "There's dents here and there. And I had really good brakes. They're almost down to the floor now."

Averill, a 52-year-old waitress, learned of her 1997 forest-green Grand Cherokee's theft when a stranger called her at home Tuesday morning.

The message? Her personal belongings -- the ones from her Jeep, which she parked at Fast Finance, 6190 Bay, the day before for repairs -- were dumped on the South Side.

"All my belongings were in a back yard at Webber and Harris?" Averill said, recalling the baffling conversation. "I thought it was a prank call."

Police later found her Jeep three blocks further south at the home of a 15-year-old suspect near Linton and Newton.

Turning the key to drive it home from an impound lot, her ears turned red.

"There was all this loud music, filthy language, all this rap crap. I thought 'Oh my God,' and I ejected it," she said of the thieves' forgotten CD.

Police said the teens were too conspicuous in their wheels to escape the notice of tipsters, including school security. Fitzmaurice arrested one 15-year-old at Saginaw High just minutes before a shooting Thursday that critically injured a student.

The group's oldest member, Curtis D. Farrow, 17, remained jailed Saturday, charged with 10 counts of vehicle theft, including the Pathfinder and Maxima. A judge set a \$100,000 bond at 10 percent, Fitzmaurice said.

Two juveniles, both 15 -- as are the four yet to face formal charges -- have already been petitioned as juveniles, Fitzmaurice said.

"It came down to it that each individual thief would not let another thief drive their vehicle," he said. "They all had to have their own cars to drive."

Joe Snapper is a staff writer for The Saginaw News. You may reach him at 776-9715.

# Apply early for grants to pay for heat

10/24  
GANNETT NEWS SERVICE

**I**f it weren't for a check from a federal heating help program last winter, 81-year-old Gertrude Lee said, she would have had to eat less or turn down the heat.

This winter, Lee and millions of others will find it more difficult to pay their heating bills.

With record increases in the cost of natural gas and heating oil expected

this winter, the federal program that helped Lee won't stretch as far.

In response, state officials and some lawmakers want to add billions to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program to meet both higher bills and greater demand.

For Lee, the \$150 LI-HEAP grant that helped pay off a \$196 heating bill "was a godsend."

Lee, who owns her home in Marshfield, Mo.,

lives on \$812 a month.

In the fallout from Hurricane Katrina, natural gas prices could jump 50 percent or more this winter with propane climbing 40 percent and heating oil rising 31 percent, according to forecasts from the Energy Information Administration.

"The increase wipes out the average grant," which was \$318 last year, said Mark Wolfe, executive director of the National En-

ergy Assistance Directors' Association.

Jerry McKim, director of the Bureau of Energy Assistance in Iowa, advises that households that need help to pay for heating bills apply early for the grants, which are given out on a first-come, first-served basis for those eligible.

"Get in and apply early," McKim said. "This is the year that states will be running out of money."

## ON THE WEB

### Energy Audit

- The Home Energy Saver site of the U.S. Department of Energy asks you to plug in information about the size of your house, number of windows, type of heating you use, and then it estimates your annual energy bill. We cringed at the result. But the site then makes suggestions for insulation and equipment changes to help bring the bill into line. <http://hes.lbl.gov>.

### Energy Guide

- The site calls itself an "unbiased guide to the myriad of energy options." Besides doing the sort of audit available at Energy Saver, you can shop for energy-saving bulbs, appliances and gadgets, such as tankless water heaters and miserly shower-heads. <http://energyguide.com>.

Source: Knight Ridder Tribune News Service



## Warm thoughts

L5J 10/22 6P

The average monthly home heating bill is expected to rise about 50 percent in Michigan this winter. Everyone will feel the energy pinch, especially low-income households.

Now, the Michigan Public Service Commission proposes rules that will extend due dates on utility bills and other measures to prevent utilities from shutting off service this winter.



Gov. Jennifer Granholm plans to sign the emergency rules. Good.

Meanwhile, Lansing Board of Water and Light's "Pennies for Power" allows customers to round up their utility bills to the next whole dollar — with the money going to help those who can't pay their bills. About \$260,000 has been raised since 1999.

BWL has another program, EnergyWise Weatherization, that offers free energy audits and some energy efficiency improvements to qualified residential customers.

For information, call Urban Options at 337-0422.

Published October 24, 2005

[ From the Lansing State Journal ]

## **Change a little, save a lot**

### **Energy costs are rising. Consider these tips to help cut your home heating bills this winter.**

Gannett News Service

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#### **Advertisement**

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# Soup kitchen in Westland to reopen

*But shelter must find new location*

By MELANIE D. SCOTT  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Full Gospel Temple in Westland will reopen its soup kitchen Monday, days after being ordered to close it and a warming shelter by the city's zoning board of appeals.

"We just received a call from the mayor, who told us to reopen the soup kitchen," Ruby Beneteau, pastor of the church's Lighthouse Home Missions program, said Friday afternoon. "We can stop turning people away."

Church officials were upset Wednesday night when their application for a variance was denied by the zoning board. The variance would have allowed the church to operate its warming center, a temporary shelter for homeless people open during January, February and March.

The warming center and soup kitchen, which operates from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays, are housed in a building known as the Lighthouse, next door to the church. The zoning board said the church had no authority to operate either one.

Church officials closed the soup kitchen Thursday. Beneteau, who was once homeless, said the church has been feeding about 45 people a day for 15 years.

"It broke my heart having to turn them away," she said.

After hearing news about the closing, Westland Mayor Sandra Cicirelli called the Rev. Michael Enersen, the church's pastor, on Friday to set up a meeting to explore the church's options. She told the church it could reopen the soup kitchen.

"I don't want them to stop feeding people," Cicirelli said. "They have been providing housing for the homeless overnight, and we are concerned about it being next door to a school."

The Lighthouse center came under scrutiny after ma-

ny residents raised concerns about seeing homeless people and panhandlers in a residential area. Some residents, including parents of students who attend Adams Middle School and Lincoln Elementary School, also raised concerns about the warming center.

The church and Lighthouse are adjacent to both schools. The church is on Palmer Road between Venoy and Wayne roads.

Although school district officials commend the work being done at the church, they were concerned for the safety of students, many of whom walk by the Lighthouse on the way to school, Charlotte Sherman, deputy superintendent of educational services for the Wayne-Westland Community School District, said Friday.

Gleaners Community Food Bank in Detroit provides about 1,600 pounds of food monthly to the Lighthouse, said John Kastler, vice president of program services for Gleaners.

"They've been around a long time," Kastler said. "There is a lot of hidden poverty in the area. A lot of working poor and people who don't have anywhere to go."

Most of the people who go to the soup kitchen are not homeless, Beneteau said. They are families who do not have enough money for food after other expenses.

"After paying bills, I hardly have anything left," said Cindy Bemis, 47, of Westland, who was having coffee at the center Friday.

"This is a very nice place with decent people. It's a great place for people who really need a place to eat."

Cicirelli said she will meet next week with Enersen and Beneteau as well as Wayne County officials to discuss a new location for a shelter.

Contact MELANIE D. SCOTT at 248-351-3681 or [scott@freepress.com](mailto:scott@freepress.com).

# Day-care provider dishes up monthly menu

Monday, October 24, 2005

By Janet Meana  
The Grand Rapids Press

ALLENDALE TOWNSHIP -- Pam Driesenga, of Allendale Township, makes a monthly menu for lunch and dinner, and shops once a week. She said the effort saves money and time.

A recipe that frequently makes the menu is shrimp pasta pie. "My husband loves it," she said. The pie has a baked crust of angel hair pasta mixed with eggs, black pepper and Parmesan cheese.

Its filling is a mix of broccoli, red bell pepper, green onion and shrimp in an Alfredo sauce seasoned with garlic. Mozzarella cheese is sprinkled on top before the pie is baked.

The filling bakes up creamy and the dish has a garlic flavor. "We love garlic," Driesenga said. She also serves garlic bread with the pasta pie.

Driesenga and her husband, Mike, have two daughters, 16-year-old Courtney and 12-year-old Lindsay.

When Driesenga makes shrimp pasta pie, she also makes a variation of it for the girls, who don't appreciate vegetables. Instead, she makes a meat-only filling with a marinara sauce. Chicken, hamburger or any other meat of choice can be used.

An entree in Driesenga's repertoire the entire family likes is chicken enchilada bake. The Mexican dish has a cheesy, creamy filling with chunks of chicken, olives and green chilies rolled in flour tortillas.

A cheesy sauce is spooned over the tortillas before they are baked until bubbly. Sliced olives and shredded cheddar cheese is sprinkled on top after it is removed from the oven.

The enchilada bake is great served with tortilla chips and salsa.

The dish is something Driesenga can make in the afternoon and refrigerate until it is time to pop it in the oven for dinner.

Driesenga does day care and, when the kids are napping, she likes to get a start on the evening meal. "It's a busy lifestyle," she said.

When Driesenga makes burgers or brats, she sometimes serves mac 'n' cheese soup as a side dish. "My husband doesn't think soup is a meal, he has to have something with it."

The soup is thick, like chowder, and has chunks of broccoli, onion and ham. It taste like macaroni and cheese, but is enhanced with the additional ingredients.

Driesenga has been doing day care for eight years and recently decided she needs a change. At the end of the year, she will quit the home-based job and going to work at Trans Service Plus.

She will work in the office of the transmission shop. In her free time, Driesenga enjoys hunting, camping and just about any other outside activity.

# Early On program growing annually

Jackson Citizen Patriot

Sunday, October 23, 2005

Destiny Radabaugh's medical condition is rare, but among kids her age she's far from alone. Each year at least 200 children younger than 3 receive help through Jackson County's Early On program in dealing with physical or mental disabilities, health problems or abuse in their home. "In some cases, it can prevent the need for special education later on," said Barbara Bowman, Early On's coordinator. "And even if it doesn't do that, it can help parents through a very critical time."

Early On, run by the county Health Department, operates by a simple approach for often-complicated cases. Fielding calls from pediatricians, parents or even family friends, the program offers free counseling to families whose children have intense needs. Similar programs exist all over Michigan.

There's no typical case. A child with a burgeoning mental or emotional disorder may be guided into the Intermediate School District's special-education system.

A child like the 2-year-old Destiny receives home visits, but has needed little formal assistance. "I like to describe them as one-stop shopping for all your child's needs," said Sheila Ambrose, a Summit Township resident whose son Preston, now 10, received speech therapy for a cleft palate.

Ambrose today remains involved with the program, serving on its advisory board and speaking to local doctors to draw attention to its availability. Parents like her have pushed for changes in the program, such as the creation of playgroups for children and a parents resource center at disAbility Connections, 409 Linden Ave.

Several factors leave Early On poised to take on a larger role. Bowman expects 2006 to be a record year.

Part of that will stem from a state mandate from last year, Bowman said, that all children under age 3 in homes where abuse or neglect takes place must be referred into Early On.

That means an extra workload, but the principle is that the abuse -- even if it doesn't involve the child directly -- can affect a child severely.

"The likelihood of that child needing Early On services is very high," Bowman said.

"The developmental process for a baby can be interrupted by a high level of stress in the home." Even without that, the well-documented rise in autism and a generation of parents armed with Internet research seems to have created a growth of children getting help early.

Kathy Miller, the county ISD's special education supervisor, sees that as a healthy development.

"I think years ago pediatricians and others in the medical community would say 'Let's wait and see'" when seeing a child with potential problems, Miller said.

"Now they realize how critical early intervention can be."

# Parents may register kids for warm winter coats

Sunday, October 23, 2005

THE SAGINAW NEWS

for their children through the annual Coats for Kids effort may register this week.

Sign-ups are at Salvation Army headquarters, 2030 N. Carolina in Saginaw. Times are from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday.

Applicants must bring proof of employment, a photo identification card, a Social Security card, proof of all household income, and documentation of being the parent that includes the child's date of birth. Parent documentation may include the child's birth certificate, school records, or child custody papers.

Co-sponsors with The Salvation Army are Channel 12, WJRT, and WIOG-FM, 102.5. Last year's effort provided 1,251 coats, along with hundreds of hats, stocking caps, gloves and mittens.

Donors may take new items, or used items in good condition, to The Salvation Army office, Fashion Square Mall or Prime Outlets in Birch Run. Another dropoff location is the WIOG station office at 1740 Champagne Drive North along North Michigan near Tittabawassee. The donation deadline is Friday, Nov. 11.

For information on applying or donating, call The Salvation Army at 793-8371.

# Job expo reflects hard times

Sunday, October 23, 2005

By Ted Roelofs  
The Grand Rapids Press

WALKER -- Times might be bad for West Michigan workers.

But that can be good for fast-food franchises such as Wendy's, which used a crowded jobs fair in Walker on Saturday to beef up its work force.

"Right now is a good time for us," said Amy O'Brien, district manager for Wendy's of Michigan. "That's what we are really looking for, some high-quality people."

Translation: The job market is so tight workers are hanging on to fast-food jobs that pay \$6 to \$8 an hour for burger flippers or \$24,000 to \$28,000 a year for management positions.

O'Brien expected to sift through at least 150 applications from among about 1,700 people milling about the Mega Employment Expo at the Delta Plex Entertainment and Expo Center. From those, the firm might hire 10 or 15 crew workers and three or four assistant managers.

And she expected to be choosy. In the past year or two, she has hired a banker, a dry wall contractor and a day-care provider for management jobs.

Rich Berry, a sales manager at Clear Channel Radio and one of the fair organizers, has seen the market swing from the heady boom days of the late 1990s, when jobs went begging, to today, when employers can take their pick.

"You see some people who are clearly overqualified to be there. It's a sad deal that you see so many people at one time. They are dressed up and they are anxious. These are people that want to work," Berry said.

This is the eighth year of the fair, which is co-sponsored by The Press. The event drew 73 companies in October 1998 and about 900 job seekers. Saturday's fair featured 42 employers. They ranged from Valvoline Instant Oil Change and the Grand Rapids Popcorn Company to the U.S. Army and a handful of manufacturers, such as Johnson Controls and Nucraft Furniture. About 1,700 people showed up Saturday, a drop of 600 from last October's fair and 1,500 from October 2003. Attendance has also declined the past three years for the fair's February event. Despite the drop, Berry said employers told him they were satisfied by the quality of the applicants.

"They said they had great quality people," he said.

Walker resident Scott Graham, 51, sat at a table with several others filling out applications. Graham said he recently lost his job as manager for a small retail store and lost his house. He also filed for bankruptcy.

His chances of finding a good job Saturday?

"It's zero. There's nothing out there, absolutely nothing. The way it's going, all you are going to have is two classes in America -- the poor and the rich. The middle class is disappearing."

Wyoming resident Darlene Ware, 41, was not optimistic she would find much, either. Ware said she has supported herself and family in past years as a contract technical writer for firms such as Pfizer Inc., making as much as \$30 an hour. That work dried up.

Her last job was archiving documents for a West Michigan nonprofit agency at \$8 an hour.

"I am to the point now where I am looking out of state, as well," Ware said.

Ware said she has gone to similar jobs fairs in the past but did not have much luck. Still, she thought she should try.

"I've never walked away from one of these with a good lead. But I'm hoping to find something here today ... something. I have stuff (bills) in collection because I haven't been able to pay things."



# Minimum wage hike is no solution

Monday, October 24, 2005

The Kalamazoo Gazette

On Oct. 24, 1938 -- 67 years ago today -- the first federally legislated minimum wage went into effect.

Employers had to pay at least 25 cents an hour to workers covered by a law generated during the Great Depression under the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Twenty-five cents an hour. Of course, a quarter back then could buy a lot more than it does today. Adjusted for inflation, that would be \$3.22 today. But, in the 1930s, even those who were lucky enough to have a 40-hour-a-week minimum-wage job earned only \$10 for a five-day week. With the nation's unemployment rate at 25 percent or higher in some regions, an affluent society was a long way away.

On Sept. 1, 1997, the minimum wage had reached \$5.15. And that's where it stands today. Thus, a 40-hour work week now amounts to a \$206 paycheck, or \$10,712 annually. That's \$4,500 below the poverty line. While single people going to college with family support and government subsidies can do fine on that amount, the number is brutally insufficient for family incomes. That's where the high cost of welfare -- from Medicaid to food stamps to subsidized housing -- comes in.

Despite the foregoing statistics, which are well-known by members of Congress, the Republican-controlled U.S. Senate Wednesday rejected bipartisan efforts to approve a long-overdue increase. That's shameful. We say that, knowing full well that American business and industry are struggling in a global economy, and that men, women and children in some foreign lands are more than willing to work for far less wages.

A GOP proposal advocated the same \$1.10 boost, but with some breaks and exemptions for small business.

U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., who offered the Republican alternative to a labor-supported measure presented by U.S. Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., made a valid point. "Mandated hikes in the minimum wage do not cure poverty and they clearly do not create jobs," Enzi said. Enzi is right. A minimum-wage hike would be a relative drop in the bucket in terms of having a major impact on the poverty problem.

Kennedy said it was "absolutely unconscionable" that, in the same period that Congress has denied a minimum-wage increase, lawmakers have voted themselves seven pay raises amounting to \$28,000.

Some have suggested that states pass their own minimum-wage hikes. We think that's a bad idea and have resisted efforts to increase Michigan's minimum wage. This legislation should be enacted in Washington so that it can be uniform across the nation.

While a minimum-wage hike may make a difference for people in poverty, it won't address the larger problem facing this country.

What's needed in America now is to educate many more of our people so that they have the skills to compete in what will become a far more high-tech global economy in the years ahead.

Michigan Report

October 21, 2005

## **WELFARE CASELOADS DROP IN SEPTEMBER**

Cash assistance welfare caseloads fell slightly in September to 77,866 cases, from 78,234 cases in August, said a report from the Department of Human Services.

The number of people represented by those cases also fell in September, to 211,402 from 212,289 people in August.

The department has held steady for some months with about 34 percent of targeted cash assistance cases having some earned income, 57 percent exempt from work requirements, and about 13 percent having exceeded the 60-month limit on federal assistance.

While cash assistance cases fell, food assistance cases continued to climb to 491,274 from 486,248 cases in August. Caseloads in that program have been climbing steadily through 2005.

Childcare assistance cases regained the decline they saw in August, with the 63,794 cases in September slightly higher than the 63,769 cases for July and up from the 61,976 cases for August. The September cases represented 112,542 children.

The New York Times

Editorial

## Florida's Medicaid Gamble

Published: October 24, 2005

Florida is about to experiment with a radical change in its Medicaid program in a desperate attempt to rein in the upward spiraling costs of the program. The pilot project is based on a cherished belief of conservative health analysts - that consumer choice and competition among health plans will improve the quality of care and hold down costs. While there's reason to wonder if those theories will hold up, Florida has been responsible and serious in preparing this test. It makes sense to give it a try, while watching carefully to make sure some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the country do not suffer as guinea pigs.

The Florida experiment, which was approved last week by the federal government but needs final approval from the State Legislature, would start by transferring more than 200,000 Medicaid beneficiaries in two counties to managed care plans. Certain categories of patients would have to join managed care plans, which they would select with the help of a "choice counselor." Florida's Medicaid program would pay the plan a premium for their care, adjusted to reflect the health status of the patient.

That would make Medicaid less like an entitlement program, in which the beneficiary is legally entitled to specified services and the state pays the bill, and more like private insurance, where the managed care plan would define the benefits to be provided, subject to approval by the state, and the state would pay only the contractual premium.

The benefits would have to be actuarially equivalent to the standard range of Medicaid services, but a given plan could rejigger its offerings for the clientele it serves, offering H.I.V. patients, for example, a lot more prescription drugs but less hospital care than standard Medicaid.

For the most part, Florida appears to be proceeding cautiously. It is not changing the eligibility rules to eliminate people from the Medicaid rolls. Not has it promised short-term savings. It has simply pledged to hold the average spending increases per patient to the levels they were projected to reach anyway.

State officials believe the new approach will save money in the long run because the managed care plans will have incentives to screen patients aggressively, treat problems early, before they become horrendously costly, and manage a patient's care in a cost-effective manner. They also believe there will be less opportunity for fraud and abuse.

But there are reasons to be skeptical. Medicaid is notoriously parsimonious in reimbursing hospitals and doctors, so it is not clear that managed care plans, which often have to add in a profit margin, can do the job more cheaply. The beneficiaries, often poorly educated, may find it confusing to choose a health plan, even with the help of a counselor, given the consternation voiced by elderly Americans over the much easier task of choosing a Medicare prescription drug plan. Most worrisome, to patient advocates, is what may happen to the small percentage of patients whose costs exceed their annual benefit limits. State officials are confident that they will receive the care they need, with the excess costs treated as uncompensated care, but advocates worry that health plans will find ways to trim back.

Florida's plan is the first to inject competition and consumer choice into Medicaid, and it may well serve as a model for other states if it works out. There is good reason to be wary of this approach. But advocates who support more traditional government spending can't hope to make their case if they resist tests of other approaches. The experiment is surely worth a try.

# On Medicaid's Obstacle Course (5 Letters)

The New York Times

Published: October 24, 2005

To the Editor:

Re "At a Bronx Clinic, High Hurdles for Medicaid Care" ("Program Disorder" series, front page, Oct. 17):

My father learned he had a malignant brain tumor in April. He was uninsured and poor, and eligible for Medicaid.

I soon learned that the Medicaid rules are so byzantine that even those who work within the system often don't understand them. There is no manual that answers basic questions about what services are covered or how long coverage lasts.

I am a college graduate but am unable to decipher most Medicaid correspondence. My father's notice of acceptance had no effective date of coverage, no term of coverage and no indication of where to send payments.

I spent countless hours waiting in line, filling out paperwork and talking to social workers. My father was too ill to do any of this himself, as is surely the case for many patients.

What of those who are not fortunate enough to have an educated, able-bodied adult to help them navigate this system? Medicaid is supposed to serve those of us who are disadvantaged and have few resources. Instead, it seems to be one more obstacle our neediest neighbors face to achieve a decent life.

Amy Wilkins

New York, Oct. 17, 2005

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To the Editor:

Medicaid's puzzling rules and demands for documentation contribute to lengthy delays in care or, even worse, discourage poor people from applying for the program. One can't help wondering if that is the point.

The sad reality is that you need an experienced health care advocate to navigate this arcane bureaucracy. We have worked with thousands of people who have been denied prescription medications at their local pharmacies or lost Medicaid coverage because of an inept bureaucracy. Then there are folks who have received exorbitant and incorrect doctor bills and are too afraid to get follow-up care for fear of getting another bill.

The solution is not more advocates or programs like ours, but a health care system that makes the patient a higher priority than the bureaucracy.

Janeene Freeman

Nora Chaves

New York, Oct. 18, 2005

The writers are, respectively, the coordinator of legislative affairs and the help line coordinator for the New York City Managed Care Consumer Assistance Program.

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To the Editor:

It is indeed a scandal that a child who needs to see a pediatric cardiologist must wait four months and travel across the Bronx to Jacobi Medical Center. Why is she not seen at a nearby private hospital?

The ugly truth is that New York City still has a two-tier health care system. The majority of poor and underinsured patients are denied access to private hospitals. Our public hospitals, to their credit, provide care without regard to a patient's ability to pay.

We need a system of national health care that offers all our people equal care.

Michael Touger, M.D.

President, Medical Board, Jacobi Medical Center

Bronx, Oct. 18, 2005

To the Editor:

We need to start employing lawyers who can challenge New York State's Medicaid payment system through litigation. Federal law says that states have to offer sufficient fees to attract and retain providers, including specialists.

Access to services is what Medicaid is all about. A child who cannot hear because of a correctable birth defect has a right to a healthy start in life.

The state must maintain a health care delivery system that can meet the requirements of needy children. Doing less is against the law, as well as cruel and punishing.

Arnold Birenbaum

Bronx, Oct. 17, 2005

*The writer is associate director of the Rose F. Kennedy Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Albert Einstein College of Medicine.*

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To the Editor:

Your article about the obstacles presented by Medicaid drives home the importance of facilitated enrollment, a program through which experts help patients navigate the application maze.

Facilitated enrollment has provided unprecedented access to health insurance for low-income New Yorkers. Yet the program is on the brink of elimination unless the state acts to seek necessary federal authorization for its continuation.

Until New York State streamlines the Medicaid application and recertification process, facilitated enrollment is vital to places like the Morris Heights Health Center and the patients it serves. Without it, uninsured New Yorkers who are eligible for Medicaid won't get it, those who have coverage will lose it, and the public's health will suffer.

Harris K. Lampert, M.D.

New York, Oct. 19, 2005

*The writer is chairman of the New York State Coalition of Prepaid Health Services Plans, an association of Medicaid managed care plans.*

# Medicare patients will see changes at hospital

By ERICA KOLASKI

Tribune Staff Writer

CHEBOYGAN - Medicare patients will now be required to either pick up the cost of some hospital diagnostic services, or go without them, because of a Medicare billing requirement called an Advance Beneficiary Notice.

Cheboygan Memorial Hospital had previously allowed Medicare patients to have certain tests performed before knowing if Medicare would cover the tests, explained Paula Jo Shingler, manager of affiliated medical practices for CMH.

"We rarely ever get a patient rejection," said Shingler, "but the ones that we do, sometimes all we need to continue is a clarification from their physician."

In 2002, Medicare required all providers and hospitals to notify a patient as to whether a procedure would be paid for or not. If the patient still wanted the test, even though Medicare would not pay, the patient had to be educated as to the cost of the test and sign an advance beneficiary notice, Shingler explained.

Patients still won't know if their doctor-ordered test will be covered until they arrive to get their lab work or X-ray performed. Services included in this program are stress tests, any outpatient diagnostic test, EKGs and pulmonary function tests, said Shingler.

She said that now, when the clerk at the specific department runs the patient information through the new software, the clerk will then be able to inform the patient about any potential costs, said Shingler.

CMH will be implementing the new software Oct. 31.

"The reason that we were never able to implement this program is because we didn't have the ability to counsel the patient properly if their tests were denied," said Shingler.

"Most patients won't even notice a change. If for some reason, their tests are kicked back to us, the lab technician will contact the physician to get a more specific diagnosis," she said.

"In the rare instance that we do have a total rejection, we counsel the patient on their other options," she said.

Hospital spokeswoman Tamara Stevens explained that the hospital had lost money in the past because the advance beneficiary notice software was not in place.

"This is a part of our pro-active efforts to keep the hospital running efficiently," said Stevens.

# Medicare scams prey on seniors

DAVISON

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, October 24, 2005

By Shantell M. Kirkendoll  
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DAVISON - Bobbie Gill, 65, of Davison, already has prescription drug coverage, but that hasn't stopped calls from telemarketers pitching a drug plan.

"I didn't think sign-up worked like this," said Gill, who was asked her Social Security number and to send \$298 to enroll in the new Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit program that starts in January. "They were just really pushy." Advocates for the elderly said she's right to be suspicious.

Senior citizens cannot sign up for the new Medicare drug benefits until Nov. 15. They should beware of solicitors asking for high fees in advance or for Social Security numbers.

"As a general rule, we urge seniors not to buy anything unsolicited over the phone," said Kate White, executive director of Elder Law of Michigan Inc., a Lansing-based advocacy group.

The long-awaited drug benefit, available to those over age 65, includes monthly premiums of \$20 to \$56 and no payment in advance.

People who actually work with Medicare-approved plans cannot go to seniors' homes uninvited to sell or endorse any Medicare product, cannot ask for payment over the Internet and cannot ask seniors to pay over the phone. The state attorney general's office said scam artists in other states, using Medicare benefits as a cover, have gone door-to-door talking to seniors. Some seniors have unwittingly shared such personal information as their Medicare number (which includes their Social Security number), birthdates and other personal information.

"If it's a policy you want to know more about, look at the information online," White said. "If you sign up online, wait for a bill to be sent to your home."

If companies ask for money up front, seniors should be suspicious and report them to the Michigan attorney general's toll-free fraud hot line at (877) 765-8388.

"We encourage people to use that hot line to weed out the bad actors," said Keith Morris, director of legal affairs for Elder Law.

Seniors will not automatically be signed up for Medicare Part D, the prescription drug benefit. It's voluntary for those who want help with prescription coverage.

## QUICK TAKE

Medicare scams  
People who work

for Medicare-approved plans can't: Come to your house uninvited to sell or endorse any Medicare-related product. However, they can call you on the phone to tell you about their plan.

Enroll you in a drug plan or ask you to pay for the plan over the phone unless you are adding prescription drug coverage to a Medicare Advantage plan you already have.

Ask for payment over the Internet.

The plan must send you a bill if you enroll online.

Source: Michigan attorney general's office.



Many seniors already have coverage through Medicare Advantage Plans or their former employers' retiree health plans.

Valley Area Agency on Aging is offering a community seminar on Medicare prescription coverage from 10 a.m.-noon Oct. 24 at the Sarvis Center, 1231 E. Kearsley St., in the Flint Cultural Center.

VAAA also has arranged for Medicare counselors to visit local senior centers to provide one-on-one help.

# Planning for a possible influenza pandemic

Sunday, October 23, 2005

BY CATHERINE O'DONNELL  
Ann Arbor News Staff Reporter

As the avian influenza virus spreads from Asia to Europe, world health researchers are worried it could mutate or combine with a human flu, creating a new virus and possibly a pandemic. Because of the concern, state health departments across the nation have been mandated to put together a pandemic influenza response plan. Michigan has been working on its plan for more than a year.

Boulton, who was state epidemiologist and director of the state Bureau of Epidemiology from 1998 to 2004, discussed efforts to deal with a possible pandemic.

Q: How worried about avian flu should people be?

A: The director of the Centers for Disease Control, Dr. Julie Gerberding, went before the National Press Club and said avian flu and the threat of a pandemic are the greatest potential global public-health threats today, and I would agree with that. ... The elements necessary for the next pandemic are being met, and if you look at the periodicity of pandemics in the world, we're really overdue at this point.

As avian flu continues to spread, and with the occurrence in Turkey, it really introduces the possibility of spread into Europe. The greater the geographical spread, the greater potential there is for people to be infected, and the greater potential for a pandemic.

What we haven't seen is efficient person-to-person transmission. There's been one questionable case, but until that criteria's met, we will not have a pandemic.

Q: What about a vaccine for avian flu?

A: There are efforts underway to prepare a vaccine for avian influenza, but they're still under development and there's concern about the timeliness - a pandemic flu getting under way sooner than avian flu vaccine is available. It's a real risk.

Q: What are the odds of avian flu spreading to humans?

A: There have been about 120 cases worldwide of avian influenza in humans. ... The further geographical transmission, the more people likely to be infected, and the more likely we would get person-to-person transmission.

Q: What are the strategies for dealing with avian flu?

A: The problem with standard flu vaccine is that it's not likely to be effective against avian influenza, so an avian flu-specific vaccine is necessary. ... Another option is antivirals like Tamiflu. You can take antivirals to prevent acquisition of flu and also to mitigate its course. The Centers for Disease Control have indicated they have started to stockpile antivirals.

The problem is that the antivirals, especially Tamiflu, are produced by a single manufacturer, Roche in Switzerland, and it's not producing nearly adequate quantities. Certainly a lot of hospitals and health departments would like to stockpile antivirals. Two of the more common antivirals, Amantadine and Rimantadine, we've used for quite some time. The problem is that avian flu shows intrinsic resistance to those two.

Q: How else could we deal with an avian flu pandemic?

A: We could use large-scale quarantine and isolation, but this is much less likely to be effective. We certainly don't use quarantine and isolation in standard influenza control in public health because influenza is so infectious, has such a short incubation, and so many people would likely be infected at the same time.

It doesn't mean there would be no use of quarantine and isolation; they might be used in institutional settings such as hospitals. But on a population basis, it's hard for a lot of us to imagine they'd come into large play. Quarantine and isolation of huge numbers of people would pose tremendous societal and legal problems.

The CDC and the public health community at large are looking at the appropriate interplay of these different strategies: vaccine, anti-virals, quarantine and isolation.

Catherine O'Donnell can be reached at [codonnell@annarbornews.com](mailto:codonnell@annarbornews.com) or (734) 994-6831.

# Program for homeless needs new check-in center

LAPEER CITY

THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION

Monday, October 24, 2005

By James L. Smith

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LAPEER - A rotating church-based homeless shelter program is looking for a new check-in center.

The Refuge Homeless Shelter of Lapeer used to process people through a house owned by the Lapeer Church of the Nazarene on M-24 next to Kmart. But with the sale of the church property, the house at the rear of the Nazarene property will not be available for checking in residents, said MaryAnn Nutt, refuge chairperson.

The agency now needs a house or office along major bus routes near downtown Lapeer.

"We really would like a space for two showers, office space and a couple of rooms for processing," Nutt said.

Once checked in, the guests are sent to rotating shelters operated week-to-week from Thanksgiving to April by 20 churches in Lapeer County.

Ten to 12 people a night are lodged in church buildings, and church members stay with them, providing them with breakfast in the morning and a box lunch to take with them.

While Lapeer isn't normally thought of as having homeless people, the refuge last year logged 1,532 guests and served 4,596 meals, Nutt said.

The Fairfield Inn of Lapeer donated towels, wash cloths, sheets and pillow cases to the program and more than 10,600 hours of volunteer time was donated.

The largest expense the organization has is a \$1,000 a year cellphone bill, Nutt said. In recent years, the group has spent just \$6,000 in keeping the program working.

Statistics compiled by the group show that 11 percent of the homeless it served were college educated, more than 50 percent had a high school diploma, 25 percent had a job and 45 percent had some income.

The purpose of the program is to help people get back on their feet after an eviction or other emergency. People are allowed to stay 30 days, sometimes longer if they are working hard to resolve housing and employment issues, Nutt said.

"Our goal is to empower them. If they are not striving, we let them go," Nutt said.

During the day, homeless people go to work, social service agencies or a warm place until they can check back in to the shelter, Nutt said.

"It's exciting to be utilizing the empty church buildings at night for people who need a place to lay their head and rest," Nutt said.

## QUICK TAKE

Refuge Homeless

Shelter of Lapeer

WANTED: New

intake check-in

center for

homeless.

NEEDED: Donated

home or office with

place for two

showers, small

office and two

sitting rooms,

preferably along M-

24 or M-21.

WHERE TO

CALL: To donate

an intake center, to

volunteer your

church as part of

the Refuge or for

other information

call (810) 441-

9990.

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# Youth get hands-on experience in problems of homeless

By Sally Barber, Cadillac News

CADILLAC - Thirty area junior and high school-age youth took a challenge from their church leaders to discover what it means to be homeless.

Young people from the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the United Methodist Church of Manton set up makeshift tents and cardboard shelters Saturday night at the Cadillac City Park in the downtown lakefront district. In the dark of the evening hours, the boys and girls, with assistance from their pastor, church youth leaders and parents, constructed temporary shelters.

"We are trying to raise awareness of the homeless in the community," said Craig Harris, pastor of the Seventh Day Adventist Church and organizer of the event.

It is believed there are 200 homeless in the greater Cadillac area who find the onset of cold weather makes their difficult situations fraught with additional problems, according to Harris.

"This is the time of year they come forward," he said. "They have been sleeping in tents and cars over the summer."

Parents helping with the event hoped their children came away from the overnight with some lessons learned.

"I want my daughter to know how fortunate she is," said Becky Johnson, mother of a 15-year-old. "I think it will help her realize other people's needs. A 12-hour walk in their shoes is the best we can do."

The youth left snacks and electronics at home, but were allowed to bring sleeping bags and warm clothing.

"This is a fun thing," Harris said. "But in the middle of the night when the temperature gets to 38 degrees they will realize it's not fun for people who have to deal with this every day."

Activities and discussion were planned to aid the young people in understanding the plight of the homeless. A game of hide-and-seek in the park was expected to demonstrate to the youth how the homeless often try to hide their homelessness.

Prepared for a cold night ahead, youth participant Mindi Johnson said not all of her friends understood what she was trying to do.

"They either said 'you're totally crazy' or thought it was a good idea," she said.

Youth leader for the United Methodist Church Judeen Huston hoped the young people also

would learn something about teamwork as they banded together to get through the long, cold night.

Prior to the outdoor overnight, students took pledges for their efforts to raise money for Love, Inc., a clearing house for aid to the needy. The goal was to raise \$500, Harris said. More than 40 churches contribute assistance to the Christian-based helping organization. Funds donated by the young people will help provide heating assistance and aid for other basic needs.

Harris said this is the first year for the church homeless project. He hopes more church youth groups will take part next year.

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